



African Political Ethics and Terrorism

By Percy Makholwa

The view that Africans must impose counter war and violence on terror groups as a reasonable defense against terrorism is wrong. The more reasonable course of action is an acceptance that present challenges are intertwined with accepting a democratic model of insiders and outsiders that can work for Africa.

Furthermore the 'violence to deal with terror' argument is popular only because defense analysts and experts who believe in 'war on terror' are actually trying to impose a 'Pax' Americana – US-led or US-imposed peace.

Dr Ali Mazrui and Adekeye Adebajo have been leading the call for Pax Africana, stating that Africans should

solve their own civil war and general political violence problems. A major part of this call involves a rejection of foreign doctrines like military interventions to create peace and democracy.

With regard to terrorism and conflict, Pax Americana can never be relevant as has been demonstrated in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Pax Americana will not prescribe multi-ethnic power-sharing and co-operation, especially if there are oil and other natural resource interests at stake.

Pax Africana is naturally about power-sharing, and is a significant counter to the single party political system.

Alas, Pax Africana has not worked

owing to tendencies of power sharing arrangements being abused. The lack of trust is because Africans are too familiar with the inappropriate package of democracy from their erstwhile colonising metropolises.

For Pax Africana to work the metropolises should not be able to dictate candidates in national elections and terms for agreement in a conflict situation.

In the west there is a growing tendency to equate Muslims with terrorism: Ali Mazrui said "...Muslims are not unique in resorting to terrorism in a bid to redress wrongs perpetrated against them... But terrorism by Muslims receives far more publicity than terrorism by others... Black Africa is caught up in the crossfire between Middle Eastern Militancy and the American War on terror."

So caught up in this crossfire is Africa. Thousands of Nigerians died at the hands of Boko Haram – a movement that is now using children as suicide bombers – and we are not asking the right questions about who is supporting Boko Haram, and about what they want and why.

We should be guided by the political ethics of great Africans and pioneers of Pax Africana like Mandela and Nyerere who called on belligerents to put down their guns and find negotiated solutions. Any resort to United States and French drones and military advisors is historic ineptitude on our part.

The solution is in our reach as Africans, as it is even for the Nigerians on the Boko Haram crisis. Mazrui says: "Fifty years of Nigeria's independence have created more numerous rich Christians than rich Muslims... Petro wealth has resulted.... in gross economic inequalities between social classes, regions, ethnic groups and religious denominations... but... there is still time for religious, political and educational leaders in Nigeria to seek solutions to... political and sectarian grievances... there is need to restore self-worth and a widening of opportunities for disadvantaged young people in Nigeria... this would be the best antidote to political and religious extremism in the unfolding decades of Nigeria's history...". ■